

STATEMENT FROM CLLR JOANNA WRIGHT

Central Government has recognised that the weakness of the city regions is the quality of their local transport networks, and how this has a negative impact on general well-being and productivity.

Taxpayers' money is going to be used to create sustainable transport infrastructure so that places are for people, not cars. Where people will walk, cycle and catch a bus first.

The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) will deliver investment in local transport networks and is set to fund bus service improvement plans, high quality cycle infrastructure (LTN1/20 standard) and improve journeys made by walking.

This Cabinet needs to agree to a shared vision for transport. This means agreement on our Key Transport Network and a credible plan to tackle congestion and parking. Plans must be put in place and agreed at a regional and a local level to deliver effective strategic bus and cycle routes. If B&NES is unable to deliver this vision, WECA should seek to take that responsibility.

Government is awarding the CRSTS as it recognises that systematic change requires visionary political leadership. Local Councils have for years failed at having a transformational vision and delivering it. A shared vision with effective leadership minimises the possible local opposition that often prevents the development of the right transport routes and infrastructure.

I am calling on the Metro Mayor to create a Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Commissioner as a way to create visionary leadership. The Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) must add the agreed strategic regional cycle map.

Our roads need to be safe for everyone. Public highways have been designed solely around moving cars and little thought has ever gone into developing the public highways for those walking and cycling.

When politicians announce major funding initiatives it is for big schemes failing to notice that individuals make small journeys more often. A timeline needs to be in place delivering infrastructure which focuses on school streets, pedestrian and cycle crossings, cycle storage, zero tolerance for road accidents and a speed reduction strategy. This will save lives, prevent injury and reduce carbon.

The B&NES approved plan for the CRSTS focuses heavily on the delivery of Liveable Neighbourhoods as a way to change the travel behaviour of residents. This local Council has selected 15 locations but has failed to put in place a broader circulation plan. Those selected are limited to a series of road closures. There is a requirement for a wider walking and cycling network vision across the city. This is acutely apparent in the east of Bath.

One of the major failings of the current CRSTS plan is that the East of Bath is not even mentioned or budgeted for despite being a major contributor to the traffic problems. Closing one minor road on the east of Bath - an area that has one of the highest levels of air pollution in the UK, no P&R, reduced bus services and few residents parking zones - it does not tackle the transport problems. The CRSTS plan fails the residents on the east of Bath.

The Green Party believes we must show vision and deliverability for transport and for this process to support all residents equally.